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[Human Resources Home](#)
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- »»Military Careers
- »»Civilian Opportunities
- »»Learn about the Reserve
- »»Coast Guard Academy

[Flag Voice](#)
[»»Biography of the Assistant Commandant for Human Resources](#)
[Future Force](#)
[Contact Us](#)

Other Links

[Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\)](#)
[Department of Transportation \(DOT\)](#)
[Coast Guard Retirees](#)
[Coast Guard News and Information](#)
[Military Locator](#)

UNIFORM INSIGNIAS FOR NEW CWO SPECIALTIES

This is a status report on the uniform insignias for the Investigator (INV) specialty established last year and the three newest CWO specialties scheduled to go into effect on 1 June 2005. ALCOASTs 482/04 and 520/04 announced the creation, implementation schedule, billet strengths, and duty descriptions for Information Systems Management (ISM), Operations Systems Specialist (OSS), and Marine Safety Specialist (MSS).

These new specialties require the design, sample creation, first-article approval, and mass production of metal and embroidered collar insignias, embroidered Service Dress Blue jacket sleeve devices, and three different sizes of shoulder boards (enhanced, 3/4 enhanced, and hard). Normally, the process from initial design concept through receipt of a sizable quantity of quality product suitable for distribution by the Uniform Distribution Center (UDC) would take approximately eighteen months. However, in this case, we did not have the luxury of eighteen months. Consequently, our Clothing Design and Technical Office and UDC have been working feverishly with the manufacturer to compress the timeline to just eleven months in order to meet the 1 June 05 target date. It is going to be very very close.

As of today, the metal collar device insignias for all four specialties have been approved and the manufacturer anticipates delivery to the UDC by 15 May 05. The First Article test samples of all embroidered insignia, including shoulder boards, have been inspected. Minor design and quality control issues were addressed last week, and a second set of samples will be inspected by 22 April 05. Once approved, the manufacturer will begin mass production. It is important to note that, like high quality CPO rating badges, CWO shoulder boards are hand-embroidered, a time consuming process. All parties involved are pushing hard to meet a 15-23 May delivery date to the UDC.

Several members have asked if these new uniform items will be provided at no cost. The answer is that we cannot provide these items at no cost. The law prohibits the use of appropriated funding in support of officer uniform items. CWOs and CWO selects must purchase these items through either the UDC (after 15 May 05) or the Coast Guard Exchange System (after 1 July 2005).

I realize that this tight timeline is creating understandable anxiety within the four affected communities. In an ongoing effort to meet our member's uniform needs and to ensure that no orders are lost in the mail, UDC operators are standing by to take telephone orders from all CWOs in need of these new insignia items. Members should call 1-800-874-6841 extension 231, and identify themselves as a member of one of the newly created CWO specialties. The UDC will ship all orders in late May, or as soon as they can be filled, via express mail.

In the short-term, I ask that each CWO limit his/her order to one set of each item. Based on preliminary estimates, a set of hard boards, enhanced boards, metal collar devices, sew-on collar devices, and SDB jacket insignias will cost approximately \$60.00. I will provide another update around mid-May. As always, I appreciate your continued understanding

and support as we work to prepare for the introduction of these new specialties.

Regards,

RADM Kenneth T. Venuto
Ken Venuto

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